

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN, PQ, SC

SUBJECT: PANAMANIAN PERM REP COMMENTS ON CANAL ZONE

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF AN EXCERPT DEALING WITH THE
CANAL ZONE FROM PANAMANIAN PERM REP BOYD'S SC STATEMENT
ON NAMIBIA, ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 29.

QUOTE

PANAMA CONDEMNS ALL KINDS OF COLONIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM,
IN AFRICA AS WELL AS IN AMERICA, AND EVERY DAY WE LATIN AMERICANS
FEEL MORE CLOSELY LINKED WITH AFRICANS IN THIS COUNCIL AND IN
ALL INTERNATIONAL FORUMS IN OUR CONDEMNATION OF COLONIALISM
OF ALL KINDS.

I THINK THIS IS A PROPITIOUS OCCASION TO STATE, ON BEHALF OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT UNDER GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS,
THAT PANAMA HAS NOT YET FOUND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF
THE COLONIAL ENCLAVE, WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE PANAMA CANAL
ZONE, WHICH DIVIDES OUR TERRITORY INTO TWO PARTS. AS
REPRESENTATIVES KNOW, THE SO-CALLED PANAMA CANAL ZONE IS A STRETCH
OF LAND COVERING FIVE MILES ON EACH SIDE OF THE INTER-OCEANIC
WATERWAY WHERE THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REFUSES TO RESPECT
THE EFFECTIVE SOVEREIGNTY OF PANAMA, OVERSTEPS THE JURIS-
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DICTIONAL RIGHTS GRANTED BY PANAMA IN CONNEXION WITH THE FUNCTIONING,

MAINTENANCE, CLEANING AND DEFENCE OF THE PANAMA CANAL
AND FOLLOWS A POLICY OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION WHICH,
WHILE NOT AS EXTREME AS SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID, IS NO
LESS OFFENSIVE AND HUMILIATING TO MY COUNTRY.

THIS MORNING WE HEARD AMBASSADOR BISHARA OF KUWAIT SAY THAT,
BASICALLY, ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF APARTHEID IS TO
MAKE A REALITY OF THE INHUMAN PHILOSOPHY OF PAYING LOW
WAGES FOR THE WORK OF BLACKS SO THAT WHITES CAN LIVE MORE
CONFORTABLY. IN THE COLONIAL ENCLAVE KNOWN AS THE PANAMA CANAL
ZONE, SINCE 1903 WE HAVE BEEN BITTEN BY THE SAME DOG WITH
A DIFFERENT COLLAR. AT THE OUTSET THE WAGE SYSTEM ESTABLISHED
TWO CATEGORIES: ONE FOR WHITES AND ANOTHER FOR THE NATIONALS
OF THE COUNTRY. THE CATEGORY FOR WHITES WAS CALLED THE
"GOLDEN ROLL" AND THAT OF THE NATIONALS OF PANAMA THE "SILVER
ROLL". LATER THE NAMES WERE CHANGED: LOCAL SALARY RATES
AS AGAINST UNITED STATES SALARY RATES. AND NOW THE SYSTEM IS
"SALARIES FOR SECURITY POSTS" AND "NON-SENSITIVE POSTS".

IN CONDEMINING APARTHEID WE MUST DENOUNCE THIS SAD SITUATION IN A
COUNTRY LIKE PANAMA, WHICH HAS INTERNATIONALLY ALWAYS BEEN
AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND WHICH HAS NEVER APPLIED DIS-
CRIMINATORY RULES TO ITS NATIONALS, YET WHICH IS A VICTIM OF THE
DISCRIMINATION IMPOSED BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT WITHIN OUR
OWN TERRITORY.
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